



# Bell Ringer

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## SDTA MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIPS

Is your student looking for scholarship opportunities? South Dakota Telecommunications Association (SDTA), of which ITC is a member, offers two \$2,500 and one \$2,000 scholarships! This is an excellent opportunity for students within the ITC service area.

To apply for this scholarship, you must have a high school diploma or GED equivalent, have been accepted into a multi-year program degree at any accredited technical college or accredited post-secondary higher education institution in South Dakota for the fall 2025 semester, be majoring in a degree/program or field of study that is useful in the telecommunications or broadband industry or which significantly relies on the use of broadband services and related technologies, and either be a customer or have a parent or legal guardian that is a customer of a SDTA member company, like ITC. Previous SDTA scholarship winners are not eligible.

The applicant must complete the information and essay sections of the application. Also, they must provide two letters of recommendation and their unofficial transcripts. At least one of the letters of recommendation must be from a teacher, instructor, or advisor. The other may be from someone who knows you well (but not a family member).

For more info and to apply online, scan the QR code to the right ([https://sdtaonline.com/sdta\\_scholarships.php](https://sdtaonline.com/sdta_scholarships.php).) You can also submit a completed application by email to [karasemmler@sdtaonline.com](mailto:karasemmler@sdtaonline.com) or by mail to SDTA, PO Box 57, Pierre, SD 57501. The application window closes on June 13, 2025.



## PROGRAMS FOR DEAF, HEARING, OR SPEECH IMPAIRED

**What is South Dakota TED?** TED is the Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program for South Dakota. It allows those who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind, and/or speech disabled to communicate effectively on the telephone by obtaining special equipment. There is little or no cost for the customer.

To be eligible for the equipment, you must be a resident of South Dakota. You must also have difficulty communicating on the telephone because of a hearing or speech disability. You also need to have an existing telephone service in your home.

The Telecommunications Equipment Distribution program stocks phones that offer a speakerphone with volume adjustments, volume amplifier, and large visual display. They also provide oversized and lighted dial buttons, hearing aid compatible phones, visual ringer alerts or adjustable loud ringers, sound frequency clarifying adjustments, and tone adjustments.

To apply, visit [www.relaysd.com](http://www.relaysd.com). At the top, under the TED program, is a TED Program Overview section. The site has a place to apply for a free or reduced phone. If you have any questions about service or need help, call 711 or customer service assistance at 1.877.866.8950 (TTY/Voice).

**South Dakota Relay Service:** If you require assistance using the telephone system due to a hearing or speech impairment or need to communicate with someone who has such an impairment, contact the Communication Service for the Deaf. They are equipped with Telecommunication Devices for the Deaf (TDDs) and provide the service. For information on Voice Carry-over and Hearing Carry-over services, call 1.800.676.3777 (TTY/Voice). To contact and use the USA Relay for call processing, call 711 or 1.800.877.1113.

# SAFELY BROWSE

*By Michael Martinell, Network Broadband Technician*

Whenever you browse the Internet, post on social media, or sign up for a new online account, you leave behind a trail or digital footprint. And just like muddy footprints on a clean floor, you might not realize how much you're leaving behind until you look closer.

**The good news?** You have some control over how big (or small) that footprint is.

Think of it this way: If someone wanted to learn about you, how much could they find with a quick Google search? Your old MySpace profile from 2007? That embarrassing tweet from college? Your home address? (Yikes.) While completely erasing yourself from the Internet isn't possible, there are simple steps you can take to minimize your digital trail and protect your privacy.

Social media is a goldmine of personal information; most of us share more than we realize. Take a moment to review your privacy settings. Most platforms allow you to control who sees your posts—whether it's just friends, friends of friends, or the entire Internet.

While you're at it, go through your old posts and delete anything that no longer represents who you are today. If you have social media accounts you no longer use, delete them! An old, inactive account is like an unlocked door to your personal information.

**Ever googled yourself?** If not, now's the time. Searching your name and email address can give you a clear picture of what's publicly available about you. If you find something you'd rather not have online—like an outdated phone number or an old forum post—you may be able to request its removal. Some websites offer opt-out options, while others may require contacting the site owner directly.

A lot of personal data ends up online through accounts you've forgotten about. Maybe you signed up for a website years ago and never used it again. Even if you don't remember it, that account could still store personal details, and if the site gets hacked, your data could be exposed.

**An easy way to check?** Use a free tool like "Have I Been Pwned" at [www.haveibeenpwned.com](http://www.haveibeenpwned.com) to see if your email has been involved in a data breach. If it has, update your passwords, and consider deleting any accounts you no longer need.

For an extra layer of awareness, set up Google Alerts at [www.google.com/alerts](http://www.google.com/alerts) for your name. This way, you'll get notified if new information about you appears online. Think of it as a personal digital watchdog, looking for anything suspicious.

The Internet isn't going anywhere; having a digital footprint is just part of modern life. But by taking a few simple precautions, you can ensure you're leaving behind the right kind of footprints—the ones you want people to see.

# CLASSES ONLINE

*By Holly Stormo, Marketing Communications Specialist*

ITC University has been teaching classes to Coop members for over ten years. We have covered everything from Internet 101 and Facebook to Streaming TV and Cloud Storage. Many members have attended our classes to learn about new technology, apps, and security.

While attending in person allows for more discussion, we are recording more of our classes. Life can get busy, so now you still have an option to learn. We currently have a handful of classes available for you to watch at your leisure. There are even a couple of the more recent classes available to watch - AI and Cloud Storage.

To watch these videos, go to the ITC website at [www.itc-web.com/itcuniversity](http://www.itc-web.com/itcuniversity) and scroll to the bottom. There you will find the videos to watch.

If you are interested in attending our classes in person, watch this section of the Bell Ringer. We will introduce the new classes here. You could also watch our Facebook page for class announcements. ITC University holds classes in the Spring and Fall. If you have any ideas for new class topics, please let us know by calling 1.800.417.8667.

## 2025 DIRECTOR ELECTIONS

ITC has 10 Directors who represent Coop members in nine districts. This year, four of the districts are up for election.

ITC will be holding director elections in District Four (Brookings and Elkton), District Seven (Clark), District Eight (Bradley, Florence, Waubay, and Webster), and District Nine (Milbank, Revillo, South Shore, Stockholm, and Strandburg). On May 23, 2025, a "Notice of Election" will be sent to the members in these districts. Anyone seeking a nomination petition can pick one up after May 23, 2025, at the ITC office in Clear Lake. Petitions must be completed and filed at the headquarters office in Clear Lake on or before June 9, 2025. If the director of that district runs unopposed, the election will be canceled, and members will be notified. Members in the districts where there will be elections will have ballots and bios mailed to them on June 23, 2025. Ballots must be returned to the ITC office by July 8, 2025.

An election meeting will be held in Clear Lake on July 8, 2025, from 1:00 PM to 2:00 PM for members who want to cast their ballots in person. A Credentials Committee will count the mail-in ballots on July 10, 2025. If you have any questions, call ITC at 1.800.417.8667.

